

Message Text

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SUBJECT: EDITORIAL IN THE IRISH TIMES JUNE 13, 1978

FOLLOWING EDITORIAL APPEARED IN THE IRISH TIMES
JUNE 13, 1978 UNDER THE HEADING SURVIVAL:

MR. SEAN MACBRIDE'S PERSISTENCE IN ADVOCATING TOTAL
DISARMAMENT IS ENTIRELY ADMIRABLE. HE HAS BEEN
CRITICISED FOR BEING "UNREALISTIC," FOR AIMING TOO
HIGH FOR EXPECTING TOO MUCH TO BE DONE TOO QUICKLY.
IN REPLY, HE RECALLS - AS HE DID AGAIN YESTERDAY IN
HIS ADDRESS TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY - THE OPINION
OF THE FOUNDING FATHERS OF THE UNITED NATIONS: THAT
ANOTHER WORLD WAR WOULD ENDANGER THE SURVIVAL OF THE
HUMAN RACE, AND THAT THERE WAS, IN CONSEQUENCE, NO
ALTERNATIVE TO PEACE.

ARMS CONTROL, IN HIS VIEW, IS NOT AN ADEQUATE SUBSTITUTE
FOR TOTAL DISARMAMENT, WHICH HAS NOT BEEN SERIOUSLY
CONSIDERED IN THE LAST 17 YEARS, SINCE THE UNITED
STATES AND THE SOVIET UNION'S AGREED PRINCIPLES WERE
UNANIMOUSLY ENDORSED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY. NEGOTIA-
TIONS ON STRATEGIC ARMS LIMITATION (SALT), WHICH ARE
NOW IN PROGRESS, ARE ONLY TINKERING WITH THE PROBLEM.
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WHAT MR. MACBRIDE WANTS IS AN IMMEDIATE MORATORIUM
ON RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND DEPLOYMENT OF NEW
WEAPONS; A CONVENTION OUTLAWING THE USE OF NUCLEAR
AND OTHER WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION; AN END TO THE
PRODUCTION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS; AND THE ADOPTION OF THE
TWO PROPOSALS MADE BY THE UN SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE

APPOINTMENT OF AN ADVISORY BOARD, AND THE SETTING ASIDE OF A PERCENTAGE OF THE MILITARY EXPENDITURE OF EACH STATE TO BE APPLIED TO THE PROMOTION OF DISARMAMENT.

THE TROUBLE IS, OF COURSE, THAT PEOPLE - NATIONS AND GOVERNMENTS - HAVE BECOME PSYCHOLOGICALLY ADAPTED TO THE CONCEPT OF DETERRENCE, AND THE BALANCE OF KILLING POWER. ALSO, THERE HAS BEEN LITTLE GROWTH IN MUTUAL TRUST OVER THE YEARS. MORE THAN 30 YEARS HAVE PASSED WITHOUT A WORLD WAR, SO THAT A WHOLE GENERATION HAS GROWN UP TO WHICH GLOBAL CONFLICT IS AN EPISODE IN THE HISTORY BOOKS AND NOT A DIRECT EXPERIENCE. TRUE, THERE HAS BEEN CONSTANT FIGHTING IN DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE WORLD; BUT THESE "BRUSH FIRES" HAVE FLARED UP AND DIED DOWN WITHOUT CONSUMING THE HUMAN RACE.

THUS, WHAT MR. MACBRIDE IS ASKING FOR IS A CHANGE OF MIND, AN ENORMOUS ACT OF WILL AND IMAGINATION. IT IS DIFFICULT AT THE BEST OF TIMES FOR INDIVIDUALS TO COME TO TERMS WITH A THREAT TO THEIR SURVIVAL; MOST OF THEM RETAIN A CHILD-LIKE BELIEF THAT DYING IS WHAT OTHERS DO. AT THE SAME TIME, THERE IS NO DENYING THE ANCIENT WISDOM THAT THE VERY POSSESSION OF A WEAPON MEANS THAT SOONER OR LATER IT WILL BE USED - WHETHER IT IS A PISTOL OR A NUCLEAR WAR-HEAD.
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MR. MACBRIDE RECOGNISED THE FUNDAMENTAL IMPORTANCE OF ATTITUDES OF MIND WHEN HE TOLD THE ASSEMBLY THAT, "CONCURRENTLY WITH A PROCESS OF CONCRETE DISARMAMENT MEASURES, IT WILL BE ESSENTIAL TO CARRY ON A MASSIVE EDUCATIONAL CAMPAIGN TO PROMOTE PEACE RATHER THAN MILITARISM." MANKIND, IN OTHER WORDS, WILL HAVE TO EXTIRPATE ITS "HISTORICAL AGGRESSIVE IMMORALITY." IT IS A TALL ORDER, BUT IT IS THE BEST GUARANTEE OF SURVIVAL. KRENE

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